

## David Lammy's unreal speech

David Lammy made his first Foreign Secretary speech at Kew yesterday telling us the overriding problem of our times is climate change. This is "the most profound and universal source of global disorder". Recognising many of us might think the wars in Ukraine or Gaza, or the terrorist attacks against shipping might be important, he went on "The threat may not feel as urgent as a terrorist or imperialist autocrat. But it is more fundamental". Pandemics are apparently more likely if it gets warmer. All extreme weather of whatever kind is down to CO<sub>2</sub>.

There was no evidence to back any of this up. There was no learned statement of where he thinks the world is in getting to the point where CO<sub>2</sub> starts to reduce. There was praise for China's renewables with no mention that they account for more than 30 times the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> put out by the UK or that we assist them to do this by buying so many imports from them. There was no analysis of why there had been plenty of climate change in the world before mankind arrived, and more again before mankind invented petrol cars and gas boilers.

He did tell us the IEA thinks the world will get to peak fossil fuel usage by the end of this decade. No great sense of urgency there then for most countries but no complaint from Mr Lammy about the big CO<sub>2</sub> producers who are increasing their output of what he sees as a devilish gas.

China, India and Russia are leading the way to more CO<sub>2</sub> this decade. Some think fossil fuel use will still rise after 2030 as emerging market countries continue to develop, drawing on more coal, gas and oil.

He had grand words for the need for the advanced world to do much more to help the emerging world go direct to renewables and electricity, missing out oil and gas based growth. Yet he also reminded us how many in low income countries still have no access to any electricity, and pointed out how much more grid will be needed before the renewables can be connected.

He recalled the promise oft repeated that the advanced countries would make at least \$100 bn a year available to emerging economies for green matters. He was unable to tell us when and how that would happen. Turning to the UK all he could pledge was a £900 m guarantee for the Asia Development Bank. He indicated support for the idea of increasing the capital of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development but did not mention any Treasury approval to ship them some cash.

So David Lammy, who are you kidding? It is very unlikely the UK herself will be producing all carbon free electricity by 2030. It is a racing certainty the world's use of fossil fuels and carbon output will continue to climb while he is foreign Secretary. His speech was empty of detail and free of any further UK financial commitment. I agree with him in not offering more cash. I would be happier if he made world peace and prosperity his mission rather than net zero, and took seriously the issues of Ukraine, Gaza and the growing

restrictions on trade from tariffs, bans and windfall taxes. How much longer can senior members of the government deny the reality that they are not going to hit U.K. targets for net zero and that most of the rest of the world has no intention of closing down all its fossil fuel based activities. There is still no U.K. government estimate of the costs of all this.